



COVID-19 BUSINESS UPDATE

19th March 2020 - In this communication you will find:

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Following our update earlier in the week there have been a significant number of developments including an increasing number of cancellations, postponements and very sadly business closures. We know that cash flow and business survival is now at the forefront of everyone's mind with the urgent need for all of us to urgently re-evaluate the operation of all our businesses. Please keep checking the [ERBID website](#) for updates.

Please be assured that we are fully aware of the seriousness of the situation and our aim is to support Levy Payers as much as we can and to keep you well informed.

1. We intend to communicate with you updates that are relevant to our levy payers
2. Continue Lobbying to government via our regional and national partners including direct contact with Kevin Foster MP; which has occurred over the last two weeks and continues.

We will be establishing next week a new 'virtual' **COVID-19 ERBID Task Group** to help steer ERBID Strategy over the next few months. We want to see representation please from across the sector. If you are interested in joining this Task Group please email carolyn@englishrivierabid.co.uk ASAP.

We have been emailing you regularly with updates. If you have not been receiving these updates please email angela@englishrivierabid.co.uk and we will make sure you are included.

The ERBID Team are currently working partly in the office and at home but **we are always available**. Office numbers are: 01803 211211/296296. The team can be reached via their mobile numbers:

Carolyn: 07968 261845.

Angie: 07813 880558

Katrine: 07753 224051

Gina: 0740 282 7219

Never have we all faced a crisis like this, it is unprecedented. As you would expect we are carefully watching the reaction and actions of other coastal destinations around the UK, all of whom are 'in the

same boat' as us. This crisis is global and there is much we believe to learn from sharing ideas and our experiences to put us in a stronger position going forwards. The English Riviera is and will always be one of the UK's leading seaside resorts. Critical now is that we all support one another.

Best wishes,

Carolyn Custerson



1. Financial Support for Tourism & Hospitality Businesses

Full details of the Chancellors package of financial support can be found on this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>, which is being updated daily.

Highlights:

Support for businesses that pay little or no business rates with rateable values upto £14,999 with a £10,000, non-repayable grant

Support for businesses that pay business rates, including grant of £25,000 for business with rateable values £15,000 to £51,000, plus waiving of all business rates, for all, for 12 months

Support for businesses via the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme upto £5m

Support for larger firms through the COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility

Support for businesses paying tax - If you are concerned about being able to pay your tax due to COVID-19, call HMRC's dedicated helpline on 0800 0159 559.

This package has been designed to 'prop up' our sector in the short term. We fully recognise that we cannot accommodate lengthy closure and we have highlighted to government the critical importance of the value of the high summer season to the English Riviera.

The exact details as to how this financial support will be accessed and administered is expected imminently. It is expected that Local Authorities will administer the business grants. It is envisaged that the £10k and £25k grants will be automatically paid to eligible businesses by Torbay Council on behalf of the government. Please don't worry calling them right now as everyone is working on reduced staffing levels. You will get the grants.

2. Our People

We are also pressing for more support particularly around protecting 'our staff' as so many of us are now having to review urgently staffing levels and have already halted seasonal recruitment. We are expecting to see announcements regarding the Governments plans to address the 'people' aspect next week.

If you have any immediate questions relating to the current financial support available please contact the Department of Work and Pensions locally for further information the best person to contact is: cathy.williams@dwp.gov.uk

3. Business Interruption Insurance

Businesses that have cover for both pandemics and government-ordered closure should be covered, as the government and insurance industry confirmed on 17 March 2020 that advice to avoid pubs, theatres etc is sufficient to make a claim.

Insurance policies differ significantly, so businesses are encouraged to check the terms and conditions of their specific policy and contact their providers. Most businesses are unlikely to be covered, as standard business interruption insurance policies are dependent on damage to property and will exclude pandemics

4. Food & Drink Businesses

It is great to see the response from so many of our Food & Drink businesses this week introducing new Takeaway and Delivery services following the Government's announcement to remove the need (temporarily) to get a license to provide these services. We are proactively promoting on the English Riviera website all the businesses that are now doing this so please email katrine@englishriviera.co.uk, whom manages the Visitor Information Service, if you are providing any new/revised services. Fortunately, many of our local businesses have amazing outdoor space and Al Fresco dining facilities.

5. Frequently Asked Questions

We are being asked many different questions and we will always try and find you the answer through our connections so please don't hesitate to email carolyn@englishrivierabid.co.uk or call Carolyn on 07968 26184.

Can I stay open?

The official answer to this is YES. Currently the Government does not have legislation in place to force any business to close but there is a new Government Bill expected to be passed this week to provide the Government with the necessary enforcement law if required. It is our understanding that it is currently not the Government's intention to 'lock down' the country as happened in Europe but the reality is that COVID-19 is an unknown and fast moving virus and if the number of contracted cases, and deaths, continue to rise then the Government will be forced to review their actions.

In the meantime, our recommendation is that it is for individual businesses to decide what is the 'right' action for them. Staying open remains an option but obviously it is very important that we are seen as a 'responsible destination' and all government guidelines concerning hygiene and social distancing are followed.

6. Monitoring and Evaluating Impact

Recording the impact of COVID-19 is critically important as we need to be able to produce and share information to both the Heart of South West LEP and Government and for us to be able to lobby hard on your behalf.

You will be receiving various requests for information, please take the time to feedback.

7. Keeping our Visitors informed

As you would expect we are experiencing a significant increase in visitor enquiries, particularly by phone and email.

We are continually updating information for visitors and have introduced a new [COVID-19 section](#) on English Riviera website where we are listing the most latest information all in one place. Please share this information as required.

Please make sure that your own websites and Facebook pages are up to date.

We will continue to manage the English Riviera [What's On](#) section and ask that you do notify us please of any changes to Events and Opening Times.

We are currently reviewing the operation of the [English Riviera Visitor Information Centre](#) and predict that this will have to close it's 'face to face' service next week to protect ERBID staff.

But please be assured that we are already planning contingencies. Maps and leaflets will be available at [Visitor Information Points](#) across the resort and we will continue to **respond to all** email, telephone enquiries and Social Media enquiries.

8. Promoting the English Riviera

Crucially important is that we continue to keep the English Riviera at the forefront of people's mind and for us to be ready to respond quickly when the various restrictions are lifted.

The scientists are currently predicting that this current crisis 'could' be over by high summer. We know that the school summer holidays are critical in terms of income. If the travel restrictions are lifted potentially, we could have a really strong July/August with many families not travelling abroad, but no one knows.

Currently our strategy is to focus on Digital Marketing as it has the greatest reach and to share online as many inspirational pictures and videos that we have of the English Riviera promoting the new 2020 branding: Naturally Inspiring, with our focus currently on the Great Outdoors and promoting all of our wonderful beaches, coastal walks and open spaces. **Please all follow the English Riviera page on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and proactively like and share all our posts to maximise the reach.**

We hope to be in a position to invest, as planned, in a new national TV advert for 2021 but we need to highlight that we will only be able to do that if all the ERBID Levy is collected.

We were sorry that the Tourism Exhibition had to be postponed but wish to take this opportunity to share with you the slide show we had prepared to present as part of the ERBID Company Update which highlights all the Destination Marketing activity that the ERBID Company is doing to promote the area. [Here is a link to a slide presentation](#) – please feedback any thoughts.